

REMARKS

Claims 1 and 7 have been amended to recite that the claimed threshold value and claimed product property are numerical. Support for these amendments may be found, for example, in FIG. 8 and on page 25, lines 11 to page 26, line 8 of the specification. Claims 1 and 7 have been further amended to include the subject matter of claim 6 and to improve the claim language. Claim 6 has been canceled. No new matter has been presented. Upon entry of this amendment, claims 1-4, and 7 will be pending in this application.

Claims 1-4, 6 and 7 are rejected under 35 USC 103(a) on Tavor (US 2001/0032077) in view of Tell (US 2004/0054614). Applicants respectfully traverse this rejection with respect to the claims as amended.

Claim 1, as amended, recites a product information contrast system comprising a number of elements in combination. The claimed combination includes a judgment unit and a display control unit. The judgment unit determines whether a numerical product property indicated by specifications in product information items of a criterion product is different from a corresponding numerical product property indicated by specifications in product information items of at least one other product based on a numerical threshold value. The display control unit displays a visually recognizable alarm display indication of a newly set property, omitted property, or out-of-range property in the specifications of the product information items of the criterion product based on both the results of the determination of the judgment unit and display control information managed to control the alarm display indication based on the numerical threshold value and a predetermined range of the numerical threshold value. Claim 7, as amended, recites similar limitations.

Neither Tavor nor Tell discloses or suggests a similar combination including "determining whether a numerical product property indicated by the specifications in the product information items of the criterion product is different from a corresponding numerical product property indicated by specifications in the product information items of at least one of the other products managed by the product information management unit, based on the numerical threshold value" and "display[ing] the visually recognizable alarm display indication of the newly set

property, the omitted property, or the out-of-range property, based on both the results of the determination of the judgment unit and the display control information managed by the display control information management unit" as recited in the amended claim 1 and similarly recited in amended claim 7.

In contrast, Tavor teaches in paragraph [0025] that product data can be organized according to a topic (e.g., "taste") and a particular word range (e.g., from "sweet" to "dry") in order to determine a natural language output (e.g. "this wine is sweeter than the other wine") in association with a particular product comparison. The natural language product comparison in Tavor does not involve determining whether a numerical property value of a criterion product is different from a numerical property value of another product based on a numerical threshold value, and displaying a visually recognizable alarm display indication of a newly set property, omitted property, or out-of-range property based on both the results of the determination and display control information as claimed.

Tell similarly fails to compensate for the deficiencies of Tavor. In particular, Tell teaches in paragraph [0059] that a particular threshold percentage (e.g., 10% as illustrated in FIG. 2 of Tell) can be entered in a user interface to filter a list of displayed securities. The filtering of a list of securities in Tell does not involve determining whether a numerical property value of a criterion product is different from a numerical property value of another product based on a numerical threshold value, and displaying a visually recognizable alarm display indication of a newly set property, omitted property, or out-of-range property based on both the results of the determination and display control information as claimed.

In contrast to the cited art, embodiments of the claimed subject matter can compare a numerical product property (e.g., a particle-size distribution, fine-particle property, electrical property, etc.) of a criterion product (e.g., toner) with a corresponding numerical product property of another similar product, and display an alarm indication when there are particular differences exceeding a numerical threshold value. This can prove very useful to the development of new products, and is not disclosed or suggested by the cited references, either alone or in combination.

Further, Applicants maintain their traversal of the Examiner's conclusion that the newly set, omitted, and out-of-range properties recited in the claims comprise non-functional descriptive material. The Examiner states that "[t]he threshold setting and information comparison would be performed in the same manner, regardless of how the differing properties are identified."

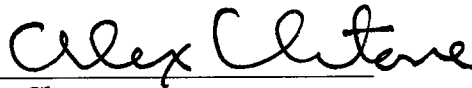
Applicants respectfully disagree. While the processing of different values associated with the same claimed property in an embodiment of the claimed subject matter may function in the same manner, the processing of the different claimed properties necessarily requires different functionality. Otherwise, distinct determinations and displays as claimed could not be made between newly set property situations, omitted property situations, and out-of-range property situations. Accordingly, the claimed properties cannot be considered non-functional descriptive material and therefore must be accorded patentable weight.

In view of the above, each of the presently pending claims in this application is believed to be in immediate condition for allowance. Accordingly, the Examiner is respectfully requested to withdraw the outstanding rejection of the claims and to pass this application to issue. If it is determined that a telephone conference would expedite the prosecution of this application, the Examiner is invited to telephone the undersigned at the number given below.

In the event the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office determines that an extension and/or other relief is required, Applicants petition for any required relief including extensions of time and authorize the Commissioner to charge the cost of such petitions and/or other fees due in connection with the filing of this document to Deposit Account No. 03-1952 referencing docket no. 116692005100.

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